THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) to (c) Department of Information Technology is conceiving of "Linux India Initiative" which will be targeted to take a set of steps including furthering of skills in free software/open source software. Other steps that will be included as part of same would, *inter alia*, include setting up of resource centres.

Various Government funded institutions such as R&D labs, academia, Government Departments, as also those in industry, are already utilizing free software/open source software in a significant manner. Examples of Government funded institutions utilizing free software/open source software are BARC and IIT, Mumbai.

The "Linux India Initiative" mentioned above would also include encouragement of FS/OSS solutions at the educational level. Already, lot of educational institutions, especially engineering institutions use FS/open source software extensively. Linux India initiative is also intended to address this aspect.

Free/Open Source Software

2331. SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) what is Government's policy towards the use and deployment of free software/open source software in Government and Government-run-institutions;

(b) what consultations have been held by Government towards understanding the potential of free/open source software in making IT affordable to the citizens; and

(c) the outcome of the meeting held at New Delhi during the December, 2002 on this issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) No formal policy has been enunciated or declared by Government in respect of use and deployment of free software/open source software in Government and Government run institutions.

(b) A culsultative meeting was held on 23rd December 2002 at Department of Information Technology, Government of India with various stakeholders including academia, R&D labs, many central Government departments, state Governments and industry. The meeting particularly focused on launching of Linux India Initiative programme and discussed the relevance of specific steps that could be taken under the programme such as setting up of resource centres, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), evolving of a set of recommendations for consideration of Government in respect of procurement guidelines, introduction of Free software/open source software in education institutions especially engineering institutions, localization, R&D, research studies among others.

(c) Based on the deliberations, Linux India Initiative has been identified as an effort to be included in 2003-2004 plan of Department of Information Technology and has been included. Other follow-up actions are being taken.

Export of IT Products

2332. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the trend of export of IT products, including computer software and IT-enabled services;

(b) whether it is poised for growth in the coming years, if so the details of the growth till 2008 and whether it would hit $50 billion as reported in the 'Hindustan Times', dated the 23rd December, 2002; and

(c) the markets in foreign lands that are giving higher foreign exchange?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) The export of Computer Software and IT-enabled Services during the last five years are given at Statement (*See below*).

(b) The growth in export of IT products in the coming years is likely to be above 30% which would help achieve the export target of US $50 billion by the year 2008.